

Speech

Presented by HE Mr YAMAGAMI Shingo

Ambassador of Japan to Australia

On the occasion of Matsuri Japan Festival

in Chatswood – Saturday 18th December 2021

The Mayor of Willoughby City Council, Ms Gail Giles-Gidney,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon!

I am very excited to be here and see so many people in the audience today.

It has been nearly one year since my appointment as the Japanese Ambassador to Australia, and this is my trip No.8 to Sydney, second visit to Chatswood but this is my first time to see so many people in front of me.

The first Japanaroo was planned for August this year, but due to COVID-19 it was held as an online event.

When I found that Japanaroo is coming back bigger and better than before as Japanaroo Plus, I was very excited and keen to attend in person!

You may have thought, “Japanaroo?”.

What the...?!

At first I also thought, “What a strange name...”

So you are not the only one.

So it's *Japan* plus *kangaroo*... Japanaroo, Japanaroo!....

It finally grew on me!

I am told that Japanaroo is one of the biggest Japan-related events in the Southern Hemisphere because it has nearly 50 different events happening across Sydney!

The program is what you call chock-a-block with so many interesting events hosted by Japanese performers, artists, chefs and variety of specialists.

Of course, this Matsuri Japan Festival in Chatswood is one of the biggest events as a Japanaroo program.

Many of the artists are actually locals because there are many Japanese people living here in Sydney.

Did you know that Australia has the third largest Japanese community in the world outside of Japan, after America and China?

No wonder we can find so many talented people represented at Matsuri Japan Festival.

I heard Australia has the largest number of the Japanese language learners per capita, than anywhere else in the world.

That is really impressive!

I can see many kids in the audience.

And thanks to you, your parents had to be here as well!

ありがとう ! (Arigato!)

Some of you may not realise it, but many Japanese products and technologies can be found in everyday life right here in Australia.

Such as your TV, fridge, microwave, cars and lots of other electronics.
But most importantly, your favourite game consoles, Sony PlayStation and Nintendo Switch are Japanese!

Famous Japanese retailers such as Daiso, Uniqlo and Muji

also have a big presence in Australia.

They are hugely popular because of their quality products with an affordable price tag.

Every time I visit Sydney, I spend too long thinking about which ramen shop I should go to. Yesterday, too, as soon as my wife, colleague and I arrived at Sydney from Canberra, we rushed to a ramen shop on George St.

Yet so many options here!

By looking at the variety of Japanese restaurants here in Sydney, I can see that Aussies also love Japanese food.

And this makes me very proud to be the Japanese Ambassador to Australia and I am very excited to try some yummy Japanese food today at this festival!

After enjoying all that's on offer at Matsuri, I hope you hop onto a ANA or JAL flight to Japan. I am sorry not to say Qantas this time. Because right after you enter into a cabin of Japanese airlines, You will start to experience the real Japan and our famous hospitality, *Omotenashi*.

I sincerely thank Japan Club of Sydney for putting together such a wonderful festival.

Please enjoy the Matsuri Japan Festival!

END